

ave turned around and headed back up-river to the granite quarries at Aswan and the Temple of Isis at Philae. In my bones I feel we are closing in on our target, and so I am studying a little more about ancient Egyptian customs for burial of the dead.

Above: J.A. has sketched the tool used to extract the brains from skull before mummification. Inserted up a nostril, the tool was jiggled about until the liquefied brain could be poured out through the nose.

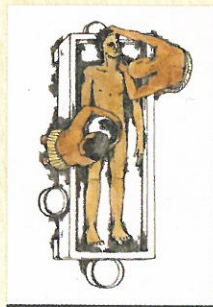
...a ceremony called Opening of the Mouth, priests prepared the mummy for burial.

Priests and mourners read spells to protect the dead man's "ka" spirit, on its final journey to the other world.



1. MUMMIFICATION: ORGAN REMOVAL

First, the organs of the body were removed and the brain hooked out. Apart from the brain, which was thrown away, the organs were preserved separately in canopic jars.



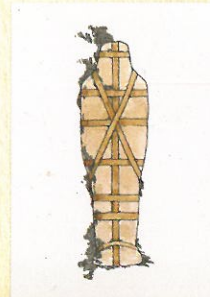
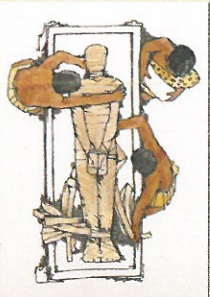
2. MUMMIFICATION: DRYING

Second, the corpse was covered in a special type of salt called natron and then left for a month or so to dry out thoroughly so that it was much less likely to decompose.



3. MUMMIFICATION: WRAPPING

In the third stage, hundreds of yards of linen were wrapped around the corpse to protect it. Many jewels—some with magic properties—might be slipped in with the bandages.



4. MUMMIFICATION: ENTOMBING

Finally, the mummy was wrapped in a sheet. Often a papyrus the Book of the Dead would be placed with it to help the man's body reanimate and his soul, or ba, to move about.